

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 3986

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ML, PR, UN, PFOR

SUBJECT: MALIAN POSITION ON PUERTO RICO

REF: A) BAMA KO 3663; B) BAMA KO 3740

1. THIS IS INTERIM REPORT ON EMBASSY CAMPAIGN (REF A, PARA 5) TO IMPRESS UPON MALIAN OFFICIALS THE IMPORTANCE OF PUERTO RICAN ISSUE TO U.S.- MALIAN RELATIONS AND TO OBTAIN MALIAN ASSURANCES THAT, AT A MINIMUM, MALI WILL NOT VOTE AGAINST US ON THAT ISSUE AGAIN. FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE OF OCTOBER 6 (REF B) TO DIRECTOR GENERAL ALIDOU TOURE OF MFA, DCM AND POLOFF MET WITH ALL MFA DIVISION CHIEFS INDIVIDUALLY (ONLY THREE MORE SENIOR OFFICIALS AT MFA -- ALIDOU TOURE MENTIONED ABOVE; DIRECTOR GENERAL SEYDOU TRAORE, OBJECT OF AN EARLIER DEMARCHE ON PUERTO RICO; AND FOREIGN MINISTER) EXCEPT THOSE NOW AT UNGA. PAO CALLED ON MINISTERS OF INFORMATION, EDUCATION, AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THEIR STAFFS, EDITOR OF L'ESSOR AND OTHERS. AT EACH MEETING EMBOFFS PRESENTED U.S. POSITION ON PUERTO RICO IN STRAIGHTFORWARD TERMS: MALI'S VOTE AGAINST US IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 AT THE U.N. LAST AUGUST 20 WAS AN UNJUSTIFIED INTERFERENCE IN U.S. INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND IT HAD NEGATIVELY AFFECTED

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U.S.-MALIAN RELATIONS. WE REVIEWED HISTORY OF PUERTO

RICAN PEOPLES' REPEATEDLY STATED DESIRE FOR COMMONWEALTH STATUS AND POINTED OUT THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED. IN ALL CASES WE ENDED BY STATING OUR HOPE THAT MALI WOULD NOT OPPOSE US ON THE PUERTO RICAN ISSUE AGAIN.

2. BASED ON THESE TALKS, WE DRAW THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

A) THE GOM IS NOW FULLY AWARE OF US POSITION. MOST OFFICIALS TOLD US THAT U.S. POSITION HAD BEEN UNDERSTOOD AND TRANSMITTED TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS. THE ASSISTANT DIV. CHIEF FOR JURIDICIAL AFFAIRS TOLD US FRANKLY THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE OF OCTOBER 6 HAD BEEN REPORTED FORMALLY TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND THEN TO THE RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION. IN ADDITION, WITH ONE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION, ALL THE MFA PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE OF OCT. 6.

B) THE GOM IS NOT READY TO REPLY TO THE AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE. WHILE SOME CONTACTS ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN THE MALIAN VOTE AS A REFLECTION OF MALI'S INTERNATIONAL PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE IN VERY VAGUE TERMS, AND OTHERS DEFENDED MALI'S RIGHT TO VOTE, NOBODY EVEN ATTEMPTED TO DEFINE OR DEFEND ANY SPECIFIC MALIAN VIEWS ON PUERTO RICO.

C) THERE WAS WIDELY EXPRESSED SENTIMENT THAT THE VOTE WAS A MISTAKE. ONE MFA DIV. CHIEF TOLD US FLATLY THAT MALI HAD MADE A MISTAKE, ADDING THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY MAKE THAT POINT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER. THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION ALLOWED AS HOW THE VOTE MAY HAVE BEEN BASED ON MISCONCEPTIONS. THE EDITOR OF THE GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER L'ESSOR NOTED THAT THE MFA SOMETIMES DID STUPID THINGS. THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT TOLD THE PAO THAT THE VOTE AGAINST US WAS PERSONALLY DISTURBING. THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION BLAMED THE VOTE ON QTE MISCONCEPTIONS END QTE BY MALIANS.

3. THE EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT MALIAN AMBASSADOR KANTE BE CALLED IN AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT, EVEN AT THE U.N., AND OUR OBJECTIONS TO MALI'S VOTE ON PUERTO RICO SPELLED OUT TO HIM IN FINE DETAIL. WE NEED THIS ACTION AT THE WASHINGTON END TO MAKE CLEAR THAT OUR ACTIONS HERE ARE NOT LOCAL INITIATIVES AND THAT WE ARE ACCURATELY REFLECTING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MALIAN-U.S. RELATIONS.

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4. NOW THAT INITIAL ROUND OF CONTACTS IS ABOUT COMPLETED, WE WILL FOLLOW-UP AS APPROPRIATE. WE WILL, OF COURSE, BE SENSITIVE TO ANY HINT AS TO A CHANGE IN MALIAN POLICY ON PUERTO RICO.

5. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE MALIAN POSITION ON PUERTO RICO WILL DEPEND ON THE DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY

THE GOM BELIEVES IT ENJOYS IN STAKING OUT POSITIONS
THAT NEITHER TARNISH ITS RADICAL, THIRD-WORLD IMAGE,
NOR UNDLY STRAIN RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN COUNTRIES. THE
EMBASSY'S ACTIONS TO DATE, AND IN THEFUTURE, ARE DESIGNED
TO LIMIT THIS FLEXIBILITY ON ISSUES OF VITAL CONCERN TO US.
WE WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.
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